

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2014 Assessment Report

Music Level 3

- 91420 Integrate aural skills into written representation**
- 91421 Demonstrate understanding of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range of music scores**
- 91422 Analyse a substantial music work**

COMMENTARY

Level 3 Music candidates who demonstrated a secure understanding of musical elements and features were in a stronger position to achieve success in the level 3 external examinations than those who did not. Those candidates whose responses demonstrated an understanding of musical language and literacy appropriate to the requirements of the level 3 standards were most likely to succeed.

STANDARD REPORTS

91420 Integrate aural skills into written representation

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They commonly:

- attempted a range of questions and question parts across the paper
- used appropriate musical language to describe musical features
- understood and explained basic musical textures
- compared musical passages and outlined some differences and similarities
- transcribed melodic contours and rhythms accurately
- identified some of the instruments and ensembles heard.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They commonly:

- gave imprecise or unfocused answers
- lacked knowledge of basic musical terms, elements and features
- struggled to identify basic instrumental timbres, ensembles and instrumental techniques
- confused the meaning of rhythm, metre and tempo
- misheard contour direction, interval width and rhythmic patterns
- labelled chords inaccurately.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- explained musical textures, cadences and tonality in detail
- outlined the structure and function of compositional devices
- discussed how musical contrast was being achieved
- matched melodic pitch with rhythmic patterns
- selected chord indications which showed awareness of harmonic progression
- identified most instruments and ensembles correctly.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- explained musical textures, cadences and tonality in detail
- outlined the structure and function of compositional devices
- discussed how musical contrast was being achieved
- matched melodic pitch with rhythmic patterns
- selected chord indications which showed awareness of harmonic progression
- identified most instruments and ensembles correctly.

OTHER COMMENTS

Developing aural skills takes time and practice. In particular, the more students can apply their knowledge of musical features and elements in an aural context, the stronger their skill development will become. Candidates should be encouraged to further develop their aural skills by listening to a wide range of music which allows them to think reflectively on what they hear.

91421 Demonstrate understanding of harmonic and tonal conventions in a range of music scores

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They commonly:

- identified chords in root and inverted positions using a range of standard notation terminology
- explained the relationship of closely related keys
- labelled simple cadences and explained them using roman numeral notation
- completed basic cadential progressions by writing missing inner harmonic parts
- demonstrated understanding of harmonic contour and voice leading
- determined non-essential notes in a harmonic context.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They commonly:

- struggled to identify the tonality of a given extract and its relationship to the tonic key
- selected inappropriate triads and chords patterns
- used inaccurate terminology to describe harmonic features
- wrote stylistically weak passages containing basic harmonic and rhythmic errors
- overlooked simple modulations and determined cadence points inaccurately.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- described related keys in context of dominant and sub-dominant modulations and the relative major or minor
- analysed melodic lines to establish musical cadence points
- developed harmonic passages involving seventh chords and first inversions
- differentiated between harmonic and non-essential notes, describing each in the correct context
- wrote chord progressions which demonstrated a secure harmonic foundation
- demonstrated understanding of harmonic accuracy through musical movement of inner parts.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- demonstrated a secure understanding of basic chords progressions and cadential writing
- demonstrated stylistic flair and musical accuracy when completing harmonic extracts
- maintained given harmonic textures and compositional style
- used a range of harmonic resources including seventh chords, inversions and non-essential notes
- considered rhythmic content, musical contour and phrasing when adding moving bass lines.

OTHER COMMENTS

2014 candidates who demonstrating a secure understanding of musical elements and features were in a stronger position to achieve success in the level 3 external examination than those who did not.

In general, 2014 candidates who produced responses that demonstrated an understanding of musical language and literacy appropriate to the standards, were able to achieve.

91422 Analyse a substantial music work

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They commonly:

- provided only basic information about the work
- wrote generally accurate definitions of the element(s)/feature(s)/device(s) in questions
- did not offer specific musical evidence relating to the work studied
- lacked detailed and accurate understanding of musical terminology
- omitted answers to various sections of the paper.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They commonly:

- wrote the title of the work only and did not attempt to answer the questions
- answered questions briefly and with insufficient depth to gain achievement
- provided irrelevant information or wrote statements that did not make sense
- confused music terminology e.g. tonality for tone, texture, dynamics, tonality and timbre, sometimes giving sufficient responses but in the wrong place
- repeated the same material in several sections of the paper
- wrote answers that were clearly rote learned, but bore no relevance to the question.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- demonstrated a sound and consistent understanding of musical terminology
- gave relevant evidence that related to the work studied
- provided information that was not repeated in other sections of the paper
- provided specific musical evidence to highlight the points made in their responses.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- included detailed and comprehensive musical evidence throughout the paper
- provided perceptive and insightful answers that reflected a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the work
- were able to build on earlier evidence rather than repeat evidence in different parts of the question
- demonstrated an accurate and in-depth understanding of musical terminology
- showed a comprehensive understanding of both the musical elements and the expressive qualities of the work
- included, where appropriate, insightful responses about socio-historical aspects, including for instance, reference to similar works, that informed the context and structure of their chosen work.

OTHER COMMENTS

The term “substantial work” needs to be interpreted more carefully by teachers and candidates. In 2014, a number of Music works presented, particularly those in modern genres, were of insufficient substance for candidates to provide detailed musical evidence across the examination paper. At the other end of the scale, selecting a complete opera or symphony or complete film score is too much for an individual candidate to have a detailed knowledge. The selection of a single movement or a selection of movements/numbers would suffice.

Repetition of material was often an issue. The nature of some of the questions meant there often had to be some cross-over of material, but the candidates who achieved well expanded and built upon their earlier answers.

The questions on ‘typical of the genre/style’ etc presented difficulties for some candidates. Many candidates wasted time here describing the genre/style etc without relating the description to their chosen work. Other candidates simply provided more (or the same) information about their work without relating that to the identified genre/style.

If candidates choose to study genres that do not have conventional musical scores, they need to have sufficient understanding of both the elements and features of the work, as well as knowledge of music terminology, to be able to answer questions in sufficient detail.

An impressive range of works was selected for analysis by candidates. The works selected were substantially from western art-music. There was also a good representation of New Zealand music, including compositions by Gareth Farr and John Psathas. Modern pop/rock genres, a smattering of jazz, and a few musicals and film scores were also studied. Bach’s Fifth “Brandenburg” concerto was by far the most frequently studied work, while works by Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Holst and Mendelssohn all featured strongly. Gareth Farr and John Psathas featured as well, while the standout piece from the modern genres was “Bohemian Rhapsody”.

Here are some examples of suitable substantial music works that were generally analysed well by candidates in 2014. Candidates who chose single movements were generally able to provide more in-depth analysis, while those who chose complete works were often unable to go into sufficient detail.

Orchestral and Choral Music

Vivaldi: “Spring” (first movement) from *The Four Seasons*, Magnificat

Bach: “Brandenburg” Concertos, Nos 3, 4 and 5

Handel: *The Messiah* (“Hallelujah” chorus)

Vivaldi: *The Four Seasons* (“Spring”)

Mozart: Symphonies Nos 40 and 41, Flute Concerto, Piano Concerto(s)

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 3, Symphonies Nos 3, 5, and 7

Berlioz: *Symphonie Fantastique*

Mendelssohn: *Hebrides Overture*, Violin Concerto;

Tchaikovsky: *1812 Overture*, *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*, Symphony No 6

Brahms: *Academic Festival Overture*

Saint-Saëns: *Carnival of the Animals*

Debussy: *L’après Midi d’un Faune*

Holst *The Planets* (“Mars” and “Jupiter”)

Bartok: *Concerto for Orchestra*

Stravinsky: *The Firebird* (“Infernal dance of King Kashchei”)

Berg: Violin Concerto

Prokofiev: *Classical Symphony*

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 5

Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue*

Britten: *War Requiem*, *Hymn to St Cecilia*

Instrumental and Chamber Music

Haydn: String Quartet Op 74, No. [?]

Mozart: Clarinet Quintet

Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. [?] in F major, No. 8 (“Pathetique”)

Schubert: “Trout” Quintet, Piano Sonata No [?] in A minor

Glass: *Glassworks*

New Zealand Composers

Lilburn: *Aotearoa Overture*

McLeod: *Childhood*

Body: *Carol to St Stephen*

Fisher: *Pounamu*

Hamilton: *Karakia of the Stars*

Buchanan: *The Ghosts of Denniston*

Ritchie: *The Hanging Bulb*

Psathas: *Drum Dances, Calenture, Drum Dances, Omnifex, View from Olympus*

Farr: *From the Depths Sound the Great Sea Gongs, Te Papa*

Opera and Musicals

Mozart: *Don Giovanni*

Gershwin: *Porgy and Bess*

Bernstein: *West Side Story*

Lloyd Webber: *Evita* (“Whistle Down the Wind”, “Oh What a Circus”)

Grusin: *The Fabulous Baker Boys*

Brown: *The Last Five Years* (“The Next Ten Minutes”)

Jazz

Sammy Nestico: “Basie Straight Ahead”

Rock / Pop

NB With the exception of “Bohemian Rhapsody”, most of these works lacked sufficient substance for the in-depth analysis required by this standard.

The Beatles: “All You Need is Love”, “A Day in the Life

Jimi Hendrix: “Are You Experienced”

Eric Clapton: “Layla”

Queen: “Bohemian Rhapsody”

Pink Floyd: “Comfortably Numb”

Split Enz: “I Hope I Never”

Metallica: “One”

Kanye West: “Yeezus”